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A RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT.

A SERMOS

PREACHED IN THE

BARTON SQUARE CHURCH,

SALEM,

ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 1863.

BY
A. M. HASKELL,
MINISTER OF THE CHURCH.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

SALEM:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF SALEM GAZETTE.

1863.

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NOTE.—The following discourse was written very hurriedly, without any thought of publication, as a plain talk to my congregation, and should be read with that fact in view.

A. M. H.

S E R M O N.

AND DAVID SAID TO SAUL, LET NO MAN'S HEART FAIL BECAUSE OF HIM; THY SERVANT WILL GO AND FIGHT WITH THIS PHILISTINE.—
I SAM'L. xvii: 32.

If we truly believe the cause of our country in the present struggle is righteous and just, this is the word of encouragement we should give her and send to the wasted ranks of our armies.—thy servants will go and fight with this Goliath of rebellion, that spurns truth and right, and tramples humanity under his feet.

The deep enthusiasm of the young shepherd, who was more than a mere tender of flocks, we should have too. We ought every one to feel that the issue of the struggle lies with him, that the responsibility rests on his own shoulders, that his own arm shall turn the tide of battle, and God, who is with those whose hearts are with his chosen, truth and right and humanity, will make the sling-stone in his hand mightier than spear and shield and helmet of the wicked.

Most of you are doubtless aware, that in the late call of the Government for men to serve in the army, the lot fell upon me. I propose to accept the alternative to go. But as there are other honorable ways of answering the summons, I have deemed it right and proper to give you the reasons for my course, and for severing, for a time at least, a connection which has become an exceedingly pleasant one to me.

I might perhaps say all by saying that it is a higher call. It is indeed a call of higher authority which supersedes the obligation of other contracts for service. It is a higher call, too, in the sense of being a summons to more necessary and important work, I believe, which I cannot put off by preferring other engagements, saying I have this work laid out or that plan proposed, "I pray thee have me excused." More than this, however, I shall esteem it a pleasure, if not a duty, under the circumstances, to say.

The progress of the war has defined the powers in conflict. It is apparent now what will be the consequences of partial or entire success on either side. Each, as it has gone on, like a conflagration, has seized upon everything that would increase the flame. The acts and decrees of each show what

fuel feeds it. It is the conflict of the archangel with Satan ; and, as everything depends upon the ultimate decision, so does much depend upon the energy and thoroughness with which it is made. I do not fear the right will fail ultimately, but I do very much fear that it will not be so supported in the present crisis as to gain the triumph it may and should. "Revolutions," says Victor Hugo, "stop half way." The people enter into them with zeal at the outset; but they do not understand fully the work they are at; the principles they have tried to establish press them farther than they had seen, and perhaps to unwelcome conclusions ; then comes a halt and a retrograde. and they restore the idols they had broken in pieces. It is no visionary fear that this will be the result in putting down the present rebellion.

The principles involved in our free institutions, which are developed and made practical by the antagonism in the struggle, are liable to outrun the progress of the people in their results. That they have already outrun many is very evident from the opposition their application has received and is still receiving. They will not consent to see freedom unmanacled, lest with its new sweep it shall invade some precincts sacred to them, and force them to accept distasteful conclusions. And herein our

greatest danger lies if we would truly save the country,—save it, not merely by disarming the rebels, but by securing the success and full fruition of the principles of freedom involved. If the crisis of this hour is but half met,—if the country now shows but a languid interest in its cause,—the rebellion will live just long enough, not to gain its own end, but to defeat our highest, and its roots will still live in the soil to spring up into a new growth of evils. This danger of stopping with half success is a summons louder than unsuccessful battles.

The success that should be obtained is, of course, the entire triumph of the principles involved in our cause over those of the enemy ; which would be the triumph of democracy over aristocracy, of freedom over slavery, of right and humanity over oppression and outrage and wrong. The success already obtained of these principles, is the Proclamation of Emancipation, which yet leaves many hundred thousand still in slavery, enough to sow the whole continent, in a few generations. Secondly, is the employment of these freed men for military service, and the guaranteeing to them the usages of prisoners of war when captured by the enemy. This, so far, looks toward universal freedom and equal rights to all men in the lawful pursuit of their highest end and

happiness. But this success is only partial, and may recoil to nearly the old status. Those who have really obtained their freedom may retain it in spite of enactments, but those whom a proclamation of freedom has not reached,—a proclamation of re-enslavement by the ruling of a subsequent power, may doom forever to slavery. The present outward success of our cause, taken in connection with the strength of the enemy and the opposition to the war at home, does not enhance the prospects of universal liberty and the triumph of justice and humanity.

There is, therefore, to my mind, a more pressing demand upon those who would destroy the rebellion, root and branch, to show their spirit and give their assistance to the powers that are endeavoring to do this work, than there ever has been before.

For the success of these principles, and the thorough regeneration of the land, I have ever during the war felt most anxiety; more than for the return of outward peace and outward union and prosperity, and for this only should I dare to pray.

The cause I have felt to be just and holy; that men were doing God service who engaged in it. I have thought I could see results that would warrant the most complete self-sacrifice; a great arena for truth and love, for culture and science and art, the

birth-day of a higher and glorious civilization. For this I have exhorted men to be willing to labor and suffer as the highest work they could possibly do. Self-sacrifice I have represented as true life. Not feeling that we are making it but in self-forgetfulness, serving others in any and every way, I have called divine.

But now the time has come when I am called upon to do more than exhort men, in my chosen office, to truth, and manly and righteous deeds. The truth that I have glorified and urged I am now called upon to accept and verify in my own act. Feeling the emergency of the time, should I be a fit teacher and guide for others if I am not willing to shoulder the burden myself? I accept the logic that brings me to this conclusion. My country has placed me on the same footing with all my fellow-citizens, and I cheerfully take my place among them. Not compelled to do it in order to be consistent, but because I feel and know that self-sacrifice and labor of love for truth and humanity is the highest and noblest life I can live.

Before the call I felt that there were certain objections to my engaging in the war personally. I had doubted if I should be justified in the sight of heaven for deserting a profession, for which I had

prepared myself by years of study, which, in its true spirit, is a labor of love for the truth, and of self-denial and self-sacrifice for the good of man, and going, in answer to a patriotic impulse, as well as moved by the same love of humanity and truth, to engage in a work more openly and palpably in their behalf. But the action of the Government, which has a right to demand, for its defence and support, the services of all the citizens under it, has removed that doubt. A choice of duties could not justify a different decision. If I remained at home, these would call me to the sick room and the house of mourning, and make it requisite for me to exhort others to purity of life and godliness; but in the army I shall have occasion to do the same. Without the call of Government the only point would be, whether I could leave this active field for another, where I should be no more certain of an opportunity for useful work; but that turns the scale. I should prefer to labor, believing that I can thus best serve my country, though the care and responsibility would be infinitely greater, where I should employ my past preparation and experience; but I by no means limit myself to this, but am ready to serve in any other capacity that shall tell toward the grand and glorious issue.

Again, this war is the one truly great and good thing that may become incalculable in its blessings to the world, on this continent at the present time. In it are bound up the success of liberty and order, morality and religion, and whatever else is necessary to the progress and elevation of man. Its success will be the triumph of these and the deliverance of the whole world ; but the success of the rebellion would be the death of civilization and Christianity, wherever its influence extended. Is it not then the one great and good thing of to-day ? It is God's war of light against darkness. I do not put out of view its dreadful horrors ; they are immense and terrible, but the fire it is leading us through will purify us and the land, without which we should die that more terrible death than the death of the body. When Christianity shall have full sway in the hearts of men, evidently not only will war but all conflict cease, the antagonism between good and evil disappear, and the salvation of the world be fully come. But until that time the conflict of knowledge with ignorance, of civilization with barbarism, and truth with error, must last, be it a conflict of ideas or of hand-to-hand encounter.

This is the law of progress that every step shall cost struggle and sacrifice. No great attainment

has ever been gained without them. No great advance, no great reformation in government or religion has ever come but through labor and blood. This is easily explicable from the nature of human beings. Those satisfied with existing institutions or specially favored by them will not give them up by any persuasion of justice or right, while human beings are so selfish as they now are, nor until they are compelled to by force. The dissatisfied or oppressed endure as long as they can; and, when all pleadings and arguments fail, resort to force. Thus have arisen the bloody revolutions and rebellions of history. But the truth and right must be upheld, law and order preserved, whether it be in making revolutions or putting down rebellions. It would be indeed pleasanter to carry them forward peaceably, but if their success depends upon means, harsh and severe, their true advocates will not turn back. God in his own appointed ways disciplines men severely: without any spite towards his children he sends upon them manifold evils, famine, pestilence and earthquakes. So, if by war and its dreadful evils he makes progress sometimes only possible, we must not falter.

Am I extravagant or harsh then, in calling this war the great and good thing of to-day, in the pos-

sible results that it encompasses? God means it for good to us, and if we do not receive it so, if we do not stretch out our hand and take the blessings, but receive only the evils it inflicts, the fault is our own.

Its most direct result will be, if we will accept it, the destruction of human slavery. Of this blight and mildew, this sin against God and man, I know not how to speak so as to express my conception of its appalling wickedness. It is the armed Philistine that defies us; that stalks before our faces and challenges us to a combat that we do not want to undertake, for it is not with him that we wish to contend. O, send an army of Davids to the Davids in the field, with the inspiration of the Lord upon them, and the monster foe will fall.

I need not recount the horrors of slavery, a thousand fold worse than the horrors of war. Its debasing influence only bore legitimate fruit in the black-heartedness that plotted and began this rebellion. The theft of the treasury, the dispersion of the vessels of war, the robbery of arms and munitions, the betraying of the counsels of the Government to overthrow it while sworn to protect it, these are all its legitimate fruit. Fugitive bands of marauders entering towns buried in sleep, shooting down the defenceless inhabitants and burning their dwellings

over their slain bodies, are its legitimate fruit. I feel no differently toward these assassins than toward the Indians who massacred the inhabitants on our Western frontier, only that, as they are more intelligent, they are more depraved and capable of greater mischief. I could forgive them if they would reform, and as the greatest blessing to them would be the removal of the cause that has engendered so fearful barbarity, I would willingly give my life to obtain it. To add my labor and suffering and life to the thousands already given to wipe out the stain of slavery from this land, if blood can wash away blood, would be but a willing offering. The reason would be sufficient for the act. Slavery removed and the way is open to all good. The spelling-book and testament shall accompany the pioneer. The spear will be beaten into the pruning-hook and the sword into the plough-share. Liberty and love shall dwell together. Peace and righteousness shall kiss each other.

I find the reasons then for answering the summons of my country as I do,—first, in the present condition of affairs which needs the support of all the available moral power in the country to ensure a whole revolution in the state of society,—not to stop with a half revolution, when outward success

has been achieved or give guarantees to the evil that has bred the rebellion.

Secondly, as my word to others has been that this is a holy and just war, and that we should labor and suffer and sacrifice in it, the call to me is now unequivocal to do this, and verify the truths I urge upon others. The call is to go rather than accept either of the other conditions, unless I find other duties that preclude the possibility or propriety of going, and I can find none such.

Moreover, the war seems to me to be God's war, and to encompass the greatest possible blessings to the nation and the world, if we will accept them; first in the destruction of slavery as the author of all the great wickedness of the time, and secondly as opening the way for civilization and morality to be improved, and for Christianity to spread abroad.

In closing I have only to urge upon you the truths I have presented, which I believe are sufficient to justify the course I have taken, and will inspire you in the places you occupy to labor and suffer and die even for the glorious cause of our country.

I hope it will be our lot to seek truth and righteousness in peace together hereafter, but if God does

not so will it, he will bring us at length to his kingdom above, where each shall receive the reward of his faithfulness here.



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